

REMARKS

The present amendment is respectfully submitted in response to the Office Action of January 12, 2009 on the above-identified application. Entry of the amendment and a reconsideration of claims 7 through 11, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Claims 7 through 17 are pending in this application, although claims 12 through 17 have been withdrawn from consideration as a result of a restriction requirement. Claims 7 through 11, which remain before the Examiner, have been rejected on the basis of the prior art.

Referring to page 2 of the action, the Examiner has indicated there that references mentioned in the specification will not be considered unless they are submitted in an Information Disclosure Statement. One is being submitted herewith in response to this requirement.

The drawings were objected to because, in Figure 8, the lead line for reference numeral 8 does not clearly indicate to what it is directed. A replacement drawing is being submitted herewith and shows the lead line for reference numeral 8 terminating at the thermally fusible filament resin melt-deformed bonded portion indicated at line 4 on page 7 of the specification.

The present invention has been motivated by the need to clean the spaces between teeth. In the view of interdental medicine, interdental plaque control is very important. However, where a conventional interdental brush is used, the insertion of such a brush between the teeth for interdental oral cleaning often injures the gum because of the tip of the metal wire of the core portion. This leads to pain or discomfort during cleaning. It is also difficult for the stem portion made of a permanently deformable material, such as metal wire, to be inserted with no resistance between teeth having some restriction in the insertion direction, like a curved passageway between the teeth. This will cause the brush to suffer stress fatigue with repeated

use, eventually leading to breakage. Furthermore, when such an interdental brush is attached to an interdental cleaning device which is rotated by an electric motor, and an external force which deforms the metal wire causes the stem portion to incline, it is difficult to insert the device into the narrow space between teeth.

Heretofore, a number of interdental brushes have been developed or produced. However, there has been no interdental brush in which the stem material maintains straightenability without being bent permanently after use in a bent situation. The small-diameter resin twisted brush of the present invention is different from the conventional brush in that all of its components are of a material having resiliency, straightenability, and suppleness. As a consequence, the present invention provides an auxiliary interdental cleaning tool which allows close fitting to the three-dimensional interdental configuration, so as to leave no uncleaned sections in the root interstices, and causes little discomfort when coming into contact with the tooth or the gum during the cleaning operation. Finally, it undergoes minimal breakdown with repeated bending. At the same time, since the stem portion is of a material viewed to be soft, the brush of the present invention can also eliminate fear for use in a cosmetic mascara brush for use near the eyeball.

In summary, the brush of the present invention is composed entirely of resin elements, including the bristles and handle. As such, the components of the brush are flexible and have the ability to restore their shape. Unlike in the conventional interdental brush which has a stem made of stainless steel or stainless steel with a resin coating, the bristles do not loosen because they are joined to the stem resin filament rods by a thermal adhesiveness resin. Finally, the bristles are formed radially by twisting the stem resin filament rods.

Claims 7 through 11 have been amended above to clarify them and to ensure that the terminology used in the specification and claims is consistent. Entry of the amendment is respectfully requested.

In the action, claims 7 through 11 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,395,943 to Brandli. This reference shows an interproximal toothbrush comprising metal wires which have a coating forming an electrically insulating layer. It neither shows nor suggests a brush lacking any metal components, as is claimed in claims 7 through 11.

In view of the above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejection of claims 7 through 11, and to allow same at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John F. Gulbin".

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